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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS,
PRESIDENT CHEN'S OVERTURE

1. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

"The Remarks about Coming to Help Defend Taiwan in 12 Days"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" said in an editorial (10/14):

"Legislator Lee Wen-chung said a high-ranking U.S. defense official has given him a guarantee that so long as Taiwan buys defensive weapons [from the United States], U.S. carrier battle groups will arrive in the Taiwan Strait if Taiwan can resist an attack for at least 12 days.

"The remark about coming to help defend Taiwan in 12 days sounds [like he is using too conservative a time-frame]. The United States' Seventh Fleet has a carrier battle group stationed at Japan's Yokosuka port, which could rush to Taiwan's rescue in two days and nights. Besides, there are B-52 heavy bombers stationed in Guam, too, which could fly to the Taiwan Strait in a few hours. What really matters is that the United States' fundamental position is very clear: the Taiwan Straits' status quo must be maintained.

"If Taiwan did not do anything but Beijing used force against Taiwan, the United States, without a doubt, would send its troops to help defend Taiwan. And it would not take 12 days. The troops would definitely arrive in 48 hours. It would be another story, however, if Taiwan plays with fire. The United States is a democratic country, and it requires U.S. congressional support for issues like the dispatch of troops to fight Beijing. If Taiwan plays with fire and thereby triggers a war, the answer would be very obvious as to whether U.S. congressmen would agree to sacrifice the lives of American soldiers [for Taiwan].

"Surely Taiwan needs to purchase essential defensive weapons to defend itself. But the purchase of defensive weapons should not be made as a provocative move, nor should it be used in exchange for an impractical 'guarantee.'"

2. President Chen's Overture

A) "China's Inflexibility Blocks Progress"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" editorialized (10/15):

". But what political dispute is left between the two sides once Taiwan accepts 'one China' and negotiates on that basis? In view of [Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office Spokesman] Zhang's usual rhetoric, it is clear that China isn't ready to deal with Taiwan in any manner until Taiwan acknowledges that it is part of China. This was, of course, not the first time that Beijing has rejected goodwill gestures made by Taiwan. Under the circumstances, one cannot help but wonder: why should Taiwan bother to extend an olive branch to China?"

B) "President Chen Needs to Review His Beijing Policy"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" editorialized (10/15):

". Chen's mainland policy could be divided into two aspects: strategic and tactical. At the tactical level, he often used cross-strait relations as a tool to gain electoral advantage, manipulating various methods contingent on the needs of different elections.

"At the strategic level, Chen's cross-strait policy could be summarized into one of using legitimacy to protect illegitimacy. Under this strategy, the

legitimate status of the ROC would be used as a cover to promote an independence agenda. .

"But by this time President Chen must have realized he cannot continue a pro-independence policy without provoking a strong backlash from Beijing. He now may have to examine carefully whether such a mighty neighbor who has repeatedly threatened to smash any moves by Taiwan to change its political status. ."

PAAL